How to build a digital-first, employee experience strategy

Employee experience has become a crucial element of success for business. It refers to the feelings, attitudes, and perceptions that employees have about their work and their workplace. A positive employee experience can have a wide range of benefits for businesses. For example, employees who have a positive experience are more likely to be engaged, motivated, and productive, which can lead to increased efficiency and profitability.

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Introduction

In today's business landscape, employee experience has become a crucial element of success. It refers to the feelings, attitudes, and perceptions that employees have about their work and their workplace. A positive employee experience can have a wide range of benefits for businesses. For example, employees who have a positive experience are more likely to be engaged, motivated, and productive, which can lead to increased efficiency and profitability.

On the other hand, a negative employee experience can result in high turnover, low morale, and decreased performance, which can have significant negative impacts on a business.

As the world becomes increasingly digital, it is important for businesses to prioritise the digital experience of their employees too. Many businesses are looking to build a digital-first employee experience strategy to address this need.

A digital-first employee experience strategy is a company-wide approach to creating a seamless and efficient digital experience for employees. It aims to deliver a range of benefits, including increased productivity, improved communication and collaboration, and higher job satisfaction. By prioritizing the use of digital tools and technology, businesses can create a more flexible and accessible work environment that allows employees to work from anywhere, at any time.

A digital-first employee experience strategy can also help to personalize and customize the work experience for each employee, making them feel more connected to their work and their colleagues.

Overall, the goal of a digital-first employee experience strategy is to create a more efficient, effective, and enjoyable work environment for employees through the use of digital tools and technology.

In this white paper, we will discuss three key priorities that you should consider when creating a successful strategy for a digital-first employee experience.

1. Technology

Choose digital tools and platforms that meet the needs of employees and support the company's goals.

Choosing the right digital tools and platforms is critical for creating a successful digital-first employee experience. Businesses should assess their current technology stack and determine which tools can be leveraged or integrated to support their employee experience strategy. For example, businesses may consider using tools like HR management systems, project management tools, virtual collaboration platforms, and employee engagement platforms. Once the right tools have been selected, it is important to train employees on how to use them effectively and provide ongoing support.

> "Ensure the company culture aligns with the digital-first strategy and fosters a positive employee experience."

In evaluating technology, focus on the functions that cause friction and frustration and take employees away from doing their core jobs. These areas of frustration are typically the things that an employee does infrequently, for example, raising a purchase order, requesting building access, an expense claim, logging a security incident or requesting IT access. By creating centralised and consistent ways for employees to complete these infrequent activities, friction and frustration can be quickly removed.

Technology like Zendesk is a great option for building a centralised platform for requesting internal services.

How we would begin: Conduct a technology audit to identify current tools and platforms, assess their effectiveness and identify areas for improvement. Research and evaluate new tools that align with the company's goals and employee needs. Create a technology roadmap that includes training, support, and communication strategies to ensure successful adoption and use of the tools.

2. Culture

Ensure the company culture aligns with the digital-first strategy and fosters a positive employee experience.

A supportive and inclusive company culture is essential for creating a positive employee experience. Businesses should assess their current culture and identify areas for improvement, such as promoting flexibility, providing opportunities for growth and development, and fostering a sense of community. Additionally, companies should encourage open and transparent communication, provide opportunities for employee feedback, and create a culture of recognition and appreciation.

How we would begin: Conduct a culture audit to assess the health of the current culture against several key dimensions. Identify areas for improvement. Create a culture roadmap that outlines steps to promote flexibility, growth and development, and a sense of community. Develop communication channels for employees to provide feedback and suggestions, and establish a recognition and appreciation program. Encourage leadership to role model the desired culture and provide opportunities for employees to get involved in shaping the company

3. Communication

Develop effective communication channels and processes to keep employees informed and connected.

Effective communication is critical for keeping employees informed, connected, and engaged. Businesses should develop a communication strategy that leverage digital channels, such as company Intranets, virtual town halls, and messaging platforms, to reach employees where they are. The strategy should include clear and concise messages, timely updates, and two-way communication channels to ensure employees have a voice.

With the proliferation of communication channels in the work place, it is important build a strategy that can unify these channels. This means pushing communication to the various channels of choice. For example, an email newsletter might also be published in Microsoft Teams, a Slack channel and the Intranet news feed.

How we would begin: Assess current communication channels and identify areas for improvement. Interview and survey employees on their preferred communication channels. Develop a communication plan that includes clear messaging, a schedule for updates, and two-way communication channels. Train employees on how to use the communication channels effectively and provide ongoing support and resources. Encourage leadership to actively participate in communication efforts and lead by example.

4. User experience

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Providing an intuitive, user-friendly experience for employees is essential for creating a positive digital-first employee experience. Businesses should design their digital tools and platforms with the user in mind, using principles of user-centred design to create a seamless and efficient experience. The focus should be on simplicity, accessibility, and ease of use, to ensure employees can effectively complete tasks and access the information they need.

As discussed in the Technology section above, consider the areas that create friction for employees and design experiences that are consistent across all functions so knowledge and experience can be transferred.

How we would begin: Assess the user experience of current digital tools and platforms and identify areas for improvement. Conduct user research to understand employee needs and preferences. Design the employee experience with the user in mind, using principles of user-centred design and user testing to validate and refine the design. Regularly assess and iterate on the design to ensure it evolves and improves over time.

5. Personalisation

Provide personalised experiences and support to employees that cater to their individual needs and preferences.

Personalisation can greatly enhance the employee experience by catering to the individual needs and preferences of employees. Businesses can use data and analytics to understand employee preferences and provide personalized experiences, such as personalized content recommendations, customized communication channels, and tailored support resources. By providing a personalized experience, businesses can increase employee engagement and satisfaction.

> "Use data and analytics to measure the effectiveness of the employee experience strategy and make data-driven decisions."

How we would begin: Conduct data analysis and interviews to understand employee preferences and behaviours. Use the insights to inform the design of personalized experiences, such as personalized content recommendations, customized/unified communication channels, and tailored support resources. Regularly assess and iterate on the personalized experiences to ensure they meet the evolving needs and preferences of employees.

6. Data and analytics

Use data and analytics to measure the effectiveness of the employee experience strategy and make data-driven decisions.

Data and analytics play a critical role in measuring the effectiveness of the employee experience strategy and making data-driven decisions. Businesses should collect and analyse data on employee satisfaction, engagement, and usage of digital tools and platforms. This information can be used to identify areas for improvement, measure the success of initiatives, and inform future decision-making. These measures, when combined with productivity and utilisation will provide far greater insight to performance than can be traditionally observed through productivity and utilisation alone.

Steps to begin: Develop a data and analytics strategy that includes the data sources, metrics, and analysis methods to be used. Implement tracking and reporting processes to regularly collect and analyse data. Use the insights to inform decision-making and measure the success of initiatives. Regularly assess and iterate on the data and analytics strategy to ensure it evolves and improves over time.

7. Continuous improvement

Regularly assess and iterate on the employee experience strategy to ensure it evolves and improves over time.

A successful digital-first employee experience strategy is not a one-time project, but an ongoing effort to continuously improve the employee experience. Businesses should regularly assess and iterate on their strategy to ensure it evolves and adapts to the changing needs and preferences of employees. This may involve making changes to digital tools and platforms, modifying communication strategies, and adjusting the company culture.

How we would begin: Regularly assess the effectiveness of the employee experience strategy and identify areas for improvement. Use data and feedback from employees to inform the continuous improvement process. Develop a continuous improvement plan that outlines steps to evolve and improve the employee experience over time. Encourage employees to provide feedback and suggestions for improvement, and make changes based on their input.

Conclusion

In conclusion, building a successful digital-first employee experience strategy involves considering a range of factors, including employee empowerment, digital tools and platforms, communication and collaboration, personalization, data and analytics, and continuous improvement. By prioritizing the needs and preferences of employees, businesses can create a positive, engaging, and productive digital workplace. Implementing a data-driven approach and regularly iterating on the strategy will help ensure it evolves and adapts to the changing needs of employees. The ultimate goal is to create a seamless and enjoyable digital experience that improves employee engagement, satisfaction, and productivity.

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